

# Hoarfrost



Collected Poems: 1994 - 2013  
Wayne Scott Ray

# EBIP

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## Table of Contents

<b>Notre Dame de Chaytor</b> <i>HMS Press 2008</i>	3
<b>Leda</b> <i>HMS Press 1999</i>	17
Gayle Collins (unpublished)1994	27
Joan Mais Canton 2003	32
<b>She Cast No Shadow</b> Collaboration poems. Cathy Inculet & Wayne Ray <i>Harmonia Press 2003</i>	34
Ann Owl (unpublished) 2001	51
<b>Going down Goose Lane Toward Broken Jaw:</b> 2002-2003 <i>Harmonia Press 2005</i>	62
Collaboration poetry with A.G. 2007 Internet published: <i>Trailer Trash: an online journal 2008</i>	107
Atlanta Poems (unpublished) 2001	120
London Poems (unpublished) 2006-2013	124

## **Notre Dame de Chaytor (2008)**

*(for Elizabeth)*

### **First Kiss**

The first passionate kiss,  
the one where I could not breathe,  
the one where inhale and exhale  
meld together, air barely in  
and barely out, your kiss  
regulating the lungs flow.

The last time I held my breath  
was underwater in the ocean,  
and now, the ocean of your love  
holds me underwater as I hold you.

### **Ireland**

Let's meet for coffee  
on Ireland's north shore

where Elfin beasts  
and Dragon's feasts  
were once tales of lore.

Let's have high tea  
along the Newfoundland coast  
beneath the briny sea  
where salt will ruin toast,  
and I will be your King.

### **The First Real Love Of You**

The first real love of you  
was the most recent image  
I have of your smooth skin,  
melding passionately into mine.

The first real love of you  
is the warm moist of your body  
receptive to a sensitive kiss  
as you draw in a hot breath.

The first real love of you  
stretched across the bed,  
both of us smiling, kissing

in the quiet room, one heart,  
is just being with you.

This is the real love of you.

### **Distant Skin**

I heard the water running,  
hot showered skin wet  
from metal pipes spewing liquid  
heaven on your flesh.

Your neck first, down the back,  
over your breasts, stomach.  
Water flowing round the mound  
above your thighs and down past your knees,  
your breath soft.

We both imagine the water fingers  
on your skin, caressing you all over,  
I just sitting and listening, you  
standing in the running shower  
experiencing the moment and smile.

## **When I Whispered Your Name**

When I whispered your name,  
your face was up against the nape  
of my neck, hair tousled in my eyes.

Lips exhaled soft wakable breathing,  
as your soft hand made the long trek  
from my chest hair to circle slowly  
around my full moon belly.

Again, I whispered your name  
and you slowly roused and pulled  
your head away, leaving the warm wet  
shadow of your face on my skin  
and it was then that I knew my love  
was like that fire brand on my neck,  
warm and lasting, circular, enigmatic  
in that even when we are separated,  
we are still very much together.

## **Biking With You**

It's been a long time,  
my thoughts about you.  
Too long because I think  
about you on a regular basis.

My energy and your aura,  
aura and your energy,  
dreams with no meaning,  
dreams unclear, yet . . .  
Strands of like and love  
intertwine my thoughts and yours.

Today I rode behind you  
on my bicycle to protect you  
from traffic as you changed gears  
and regardless of the struggle  
the tires went in one direction  
together, rolling on down the street,  
four tires, one goal, moving on  
for the common end,  
together, regardless of the struggle.

## **Ides Of March**

The Ides of March was cold  
for Caesar but here, snow melts  
on the fifteenth as you sleep.  
This winter has been cold.  
Often I have slept in the cold.  
Often you double quilt in the cold.  
This winter has been cold.

Illusion can appear the reality  
as reality can be illusion  
like last week's bright sun  
in the early morning fog, little  
penetration in the moist cold, warm, cold.  
Not for a long time will there  
be a burgundy or turquoise sky  
or the smell of lilacs or lilies,  
as welcome as the smells  
drifting up from your bright apartment  
into the winter colored hallway  
where we stand to say goodnight.

My tongue, like a knife, pokes  
through my lips as I kiss  
your neck in the cold doorway.  
The warmth of my face melts  
the winter your face sometimes feels.  
Tongue on skin, lips on lips,  
O Great Caesar, you were wrong,  
the knife you felt on the Ides  
of March brings not death but life.  
The heart lives and breathes as  
I pull my knife tongue from  
your neck and step back inside  
not parting, not leaving, not  
going home to sleep in the cold.  
I step inside and close the door and  
see the first flower of spring  
burst forth from your eyes.

## **Your Breath**

Your breath soft  
as the leaf unfolds in spring,  
morning air coaxing open  
a beautiful dawn, where

the endless night had you  
sleeping beside me.

Today starts with you  
dawn becomes day,  
your breath now an open leaf  
lips the curved edge,  
upturned as you inhale.

Where you are in the ether,  
your wandering wondering  
sleep memory dream state  
is no matter as you wake,  
as you smile, fingers  
reaching out for my shoulder,  
eyes open as you realize  
you are not alone now.

Your breath ten thousand leaves  
drawing in all the room's air,  
your lips soft kiss my skin  
and I can hear the whole forest exhale.

### **Working On My Wall**

Kissing your lips, to me,  
was like caressing your heart  
and under normal circumstances  
full-body hormonal enthusiasm  
would surely have prevailed.

Tiny bricks piled up from your toes  
reaching the nether regions of what  
should have shown my love for you.  
You would have by now noticed  
that the wall blocked my ego  
from projecting an erectile undercover.

I was only thinking of a kiss,  
but your mind was elsewhere, envisioning  
that the wall should not have been there.

Then my admissions, truth or dare,  
understanding of new enlightened relationships.  
I am working on my wall,  
it crumbles everyday

you hold my hand  
and smile.

### **This Is The Quiet Of You**

This is the quiet of you;  
putting on a kettle, all  
the lights are on in the heat  
and after the boil, on the red  
couch in your pajamas sitting  
with your left hand extended,  
applying burgundy nail polish,

some music in the background,  
Beethoven perhaps as the computer  
downloads a movie or a song,  
TV is muted, ready  
to display a game or DVD and  
all the lights are flashing red,

your brain is in focus, ridding  
itself of the long weeks work,  
car problems, Facebook fiascoes  
and pleasures, winter weather,  
housework done or to do, mystery  
chocolates left at your door, lost  
friends and no more Grand Marnier.

Two hours pass by and you reach over  
to rub your hand where he sat,  
remember the old warmth  
and reach for the phone.

## **Valentine's Day 2008**

One can dream be the Captain of a ship,  
and prepare to set sail for foreign shores,  
to firm set upon the wheel of the ship,  
out of some known harbor safe from wars.

For every ship there can only one Captain be,  
to weigh anchor, set sail and load the hold,  
gather stores, weapons for battle at sea,  
and in the galley be first with stories of old.

In the evening just before wide sunset,  
all is quiet on the decks where day is done,  
the Captain, hands upon the wheel are set,  
and all aboard remember shore await the morning sun.

Alone he stands and steers through the night,  
against a star lit sea, moon above him floats,  
just below, ah just below she lays and is his might,  
for without her strength, he is just a man in a boat.

She is the true Captain of his ship,  
she lets it float, sink, or sail above,  
supports, encourages or shows true grit,  
alone she is just the sea, together there is love.

Across time and sailing free,  
never alone but together, be,  
you with me and I with you,  
searching and finding the Isle of View.

## **My Father**

I wish you could have known my father  
but death came knocking and it was  
long before your door opened  
and you met me.

I wish you could have met my father  
but as I got older and he got further  
away from being able to hold your hand  
and tell tales you would have smiled at,  
I have only one wish that you could have  
met my father.

What a wonderful world to have you  
beside me, to have to tell you how  
he would have loved you too.  
His long arm around your shoulder,  
tucked up in a tall tale in front of  
a fireplace somewhere, your sweet smile  
knowing my father.

In *RopeDancer* 2012 TOPS anthology  
Beret Days Press

## **January**

January  
holds the moisture,  
bed linens double dried  
before a deep sleep ensues,  
and I find myself at 6am  
beside your double bed  
gazing out the window.

January temperatures  
rise overnight,  
snow releases a dense fog  
knocking at your window  
warming the balcony steel  
and the plastic chairs,  
and I, thinking I was quiet,  
feel you behind me,  
hands on the middle  
of my bare back, wishing  
they too had been  
in that bed linen drier.

In *RopeDancer* 2012 TOPS anthology  
Beret Days Press

## **Confessions**

Forgive me for I have sinned.  
It has been a year since my last poem,  
it was not about you though.  
It has been eight months since my last kiss,  
and that, actually, was yours.  
It has been four months since  
I held a woman's hand,  
and the woman that I see sleeping,  
was her, was you.  
Reclining under the skylight softly breathing,  
I can barely hear the inhale  
and exhale of your lungs.  
It has been two months since you said I love you  
though it was for someone else, but it has  
only been two days since I said, I love you.  
Yesterday my Purgatory ended with your smile.  
Yesterday my Purgatory ended  
with your hand in mine.

Forgive me now for I want to sin,  
reach over and kiss your dream filled sleep,  
reach over and touch your soft beautiful skin,  
but we don't have to be beside each other  
to be together as one, more than just friends.

So I sit here and watch you sleeping,  
having not sinned and wait breathlessly  
to be one with you again.

## **Leda: White Swan (1999)**

(*for Linda Joy*)

### **Ocean Fury**

More than one ocean fury  
has this saline tide boiled,  
slammed foamed sea and ships  
against the coastal red sandstone.

Just beneath the emerald surface  
where no winds care to blow  
and the azure sky fails to penetrate  
the furied foam, lies a stillness.

In this sharks domain, liquid life  
between heaven and earth, stalactites  
filter out the furies howl and hate,  
inside this deep protective cave.

Gaia, Earth Mother, Woman asleep as rock  
where ocean tide raises up your skin,  
flesh of Poseidon carried in on fury foam  
caressing the world you hold so dear.

Your darkness now enlightened, living,  
moulded rock and salty skin unite  
and soften the cracks and crevasses,  
melt and reform the crystal cave, become one.

The ocean tide recedes and quiet reigns  
just beneath the emerald surface.  
Gaia sleeps, refreshed, reunited again  
where only the Gods dare tread.

### **Where Are You My Love?**

Where are you my love, lost in laughter?  
The world around you holds its breath,  
blue flowers wait to bloom,  
the sun hesitates to set unless it too,  
has your smile.  
Water bursts forth from its fountain  
and rainbows reflect your face  
in the distance, down the long road from here,  
and we know it's you.  
Do not feed me bread nor white wine.  
Clothe me not nor sandal my feet  
on this pebbled road where

my skin might bleed in joy.  
I hear your smile, see your laughter.  
The day can never end, love,  
unless your lips open in hearts voice,  
arms outstretched, your hands orchestrate  
the birds song, the flowers finally bloom  
and the sun sets at your command.  
Your laughter ends each day of my life, love,  
and wakes the dawn forever,  
but today the world stands still  
because we know not where you are, love?

Where are you my love?  
Lost in laughter somewhere?

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD  
HMS Press 2003

## Joy

On the street in front of my house  
runs a sidewalk made of clay.  
In the hot summer weather  
the clay bakes hard and dry.

I sat on the porch surrounded by memories  
watching the world pass me by  
thinking about the long road home.

You were off in the distance, barefoot  
as the sun broke free from the clouds.  
I watched you walk towards me  
and stop in front of my house.

Something I said made you cry,  
not a sadness nor a shadowed cry,  
but a phrase that made you wonder why  
you had never before passed this way by.

You smiled as the tears met the clay  
and from the soft earth, formed a stone  
with your tender caring hands,  
as your heart carved out a name, Joy.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD  
HMS Press 2003

## River Avon

Come and sit on this bench beside me  
in the park along the river Avon  
and tell me why we are here  
leaning against the rose trellis  
counting out the days as the Fall slips in.

What are we supposed to do when it rains  
and the earth soaks up the pitter patter  
as it falls from the sky beside the river  
where the roses have lost their satin sheen.

Come and sit on this bench beside me  
in the park along the river Avon  
and I shall tell you why we are here  
leaning against the rose trellis  
as Fall slips in around the stones and the swans.

Friendship should be floating through a dark blue sky,  
love more than daily words on folded paper  
and happiness a violin playing songs  
by Leonard Cohen.

Out here along the river Avon, beside this bench  
the last rose bud decides tomorrow to burst forth  
remaining closed in our shadow, thinking it is night.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD  
HMS Press 2003

### **Sunday Evening : Alone**

We'll have poetry my love  
but tonight, there is only quiet.  
My heart that wanted singing  
is of a great sadness ringing.

We'll have a dance my love,  
but tonight, there is only quiet.  
My arms that wanted hugging  
have now only shoulders shrugging.

We'll have a song my love  
but tonight, there is only quiet.  
All the birds have a silent longing  
and I too have a silent songing.

Poetry, dance, and song my love  
but there is only quiet, tonight my love.  
I long for just a simple thing, my love,  
poetry, dance, song and thee, my love

## Affirmation

If you believe in yourself.  
If you know that I believe in you.  
If you know that your friends believe in you.  
If you believe in the fate that  
told you to write the book  
If you believe now is the time  
to share and spill forth  
the flowers from your brain.  
I you believe your children  
will support your efforts.  
If you know that I love you and support you  
If you believe the Serpents Tail  
and that not all men are mean.  
If you believe you have finished stomping  
and crying and can now center yourself  
and focus on the truth to be shared.

You are the chosen one . . .

## What Pain, Heartache

What pain, heartache  
that keeps you in my thoughts  
after you have said goodbye.

What is this thing called Love  
to be so one sided, or, not listening,  
been two sided all along.

Where was I not listening but  
staring into your heart looking  
to find myself, already there.

Oh my sweet Joy, do we have to let go  
the mind that binds my love to yours,  
for yours let go long ago, and not.

But every time I see you, kiss  
your sweet lips and touch your skin,  
I melt back into my comfort zone  
and you begin to let down your defences  
accept some of my faults and dream of me.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD  
HMS Press 2003

## **Dancing**

We never did go dancing  
where glaciers melt and  
angels lightly tread,  
where eagle wings separate  
clouds from the rising sun.

We never did go dancing  
where magnolias stain the air  
and lakes are crystal clear,  
where a babies feather breath  
touches on human skin.

If we had gone dancing,  
we would have missed the silence  
between us and the first laughter in our smiles.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD  
HMS Press 2003

## **I Have A Secret Life**

(adapted)

When I arise and dress in this  
holy place near the Avon River,  
I wonder why the past has clasped  
your wrists and bound you to this place?

Goddess, Gaia, you are light  
in this temple where you sleep  
arms folded across your gentle heart.

At your feet I remain your servant,  
yet hold the key to your salvation.  
In a dream you see the answer questioned  
as I rise from this place where you sleep.

That breeze you feel upon your cheek  
my friend, is I, the sound of one hand clapping.

## **Flower Children**

Flowers burst forth from her brain.  
Petals manifest themselves  
at the nape of her moonlight neck  
where her hair hangs on celestial worlds.  
Orchids peer out from armpits, smooth  
and pale like Delft hyacinths and from  
her mouth laughter known to no one  
but the morning sun as it beats down,  
drying the mist at her naked feet.

Flowers burst forth from her brain.  
Magnolia blossoms are round as her breasts  
and scented to take the breath away  
from the flower children beside her.  
Trickle of Poseidon out her navel,  
run down her wanting belly onto her  
poinsettia petal thighs. She dreams  
of love and searches for Gaia, oh  
Earth Mother, priestess, angel of my youth,  
enter my soul, fill me with your light.

In: *Prisoner of Women's Dreams* audio CD  
HMS Press 2003

## **Gayle Collins (1994)**

### **Tumbling**

There is more to fear  
in a cradled crescent night  
than the thought of promises  
being broken by a lover  
aching to kiss another.

Dreams, like nightmares,  
get caught in the leaves of trees  
hidden behind the daylight,  
needing to be touched and  
shaped by gentle hands  
until frost sets them free.

Nightmares, as these dreams  
are hiding behind the daylight  
fading with dawn's crescent moon,  
tumbling to the ground in Fall  
where you lay naked under the trees.  
The leaves caress your skin,  
not sure if this peacefulness  
will be broken by a nightmares promise  
or a lovers moonlight dream.

A warm October sun  
heats up your mushroom skin.  
A soft breeze from the South  
lifts and separates the leaves  
from where they want to stay.

Down. Down. Down.  
The last leaf of Fall.  
Nightmare tumbling or  
dream tumbling,  
hiding behind nature's kiss.

Down. Down. Down.  
The last leaf of Fall,  
upon your wanting belly.  
Its hard curved stem alive  
in your scented garden.  
Perfumed by love.  
Moistened by lust.

Which fear will you leave behind  
as it enters your womb and  
wraps itself around your heart?

*Trees of Surprise*, BlazeVox Buffalo, New York, 2007

### **Part of Me**

Which part of you wants to stay?  
is it sins soft lips  
or where my hand shall lay,  
is it deep inside your freckled breast  
or a beating heart that  
has known no rest,  
is it in your eyes  
or between your thighs?  
Which part of you wants to stay?

My feeling is,  
and it shall be this,  
that moment just before  
and just after a kiss.

## **Hoarfrost**

Milkweed pods and golden rod, their  
hoarfrost melted by the sunrise  
along the gravel road that has seen  
many a ravens' midnight wing.  
Just leeside of the frost and  
as far as the eye can see at dawn,  
the silhouette of a million pea seeds  
hung in their pre-harvest wombs  
trail shadows with this day's sun.

So quiet you can hear the wind passing  
over the last raven's wings as it  
lands, talons crunching the soil  
a distance away. Waiting and watching.

The sun breaks into daylight  
above a hill, warming the good Earth,  
the road less traveled and two  
night weary travelers.

Pulling a bent leg to her chest  
on the warm hood of the car at roadside  
she shades her eyes as the morning light  
changes from a cool orange  
to a warmer yellow.  
She watches her dream lover stride  
out into the farmer's field with his heart  
in one hand and their future in the other.

He turns toward her and sings his song,  
ravens rise in the morning air,  
starlings land at her feet, she smiles,  
catches his love one word at a time,  
closes her eyes for a sunshine second,  
breathes deeply to calm pre-dawn fears,  
slides off the hood and back inside  
travelling the road less travelled, alone.

The note on the small box beside her read:  
Come to me my lady white,  
just after dawn in early light,  
with this ring as a compass we shall start  
to rewrite the map of the human heart.

Road dust settled on ravens wings.  
Golden rod less golden for a furlong.  
Pea pods become corn husks and wheat fields  
and the tires of her car headed East for the coast.  
The rising sun burning his memory in her tears.

The fear of a forever love is stronger  
than the fear of friendship, she thought.  
The dust collected on the grass and  
the hoarfrost would be the only thing returning.

## **Joan Mais Canton (2003)**

### **4 am**

4am and the street is quiet.  
I can't sleep past the crickets call  
or the lights of passing cars and  
the only thing connecting us  
here in the dark and indolent city  
is the number on the door. 116.  
You forgot to mention synchronicity  
over coffee or in passing.  
Numbers play a role in our lives  
like dice on a green velvet table  
your place or mine, the same  
except for the street name.

Sleep now woman, sleep  
and this e-mail dream enters  
your home to kiss you softly  
when you awake. I travel to  
be with you in cyberspace  
if only to share this number  
that you already possess.

### **Corn**

After I found out my great  
grandfather was a Cherokee  
I learned that a symbol,  
universal in nature,  
defined that southern tribe.

Far distant now I sit  
in this small restaurant, staring  
out the window at a gray sky  
that once graced our ancestors.

This small connection between us,  
synchronistic at best, is  
pronounced the same no matter  
how it is spelled. How, you say?

Maize trop facile, mon ami!  
Mais, tu pronounce comme ça.



## **She Cast No Shadow**

Cathy Inculet, Wayne Ray Collaboration Poems  
Harmonia Press

### **the abyss**

He had seen her light on  
through the window darkly,  
each morning after work.  
He tried to cross the abyss  
of asphalt to her door,  
yet felt helpless like snowfall on cedars,  
ready to melt.

Why didn't she look out the window just to see  
the morning light that paled against his heart.  
Again and again he tossed it toward her door,  
a snowball getting smaller in a slowly melting roll  
across the black and wide sun warming road  
until only a tiny snowflake at its core  
was left to reach and softly kiss her door.

### **ode to del**

He tipped the waitress  
with whom he had been flirting  
innocuously, innocently, in well received fun  
he lasciviously tucked a two dollar coin  
beneath the saucer  
feeling its movement  
imbuing it with his essence  
metal touching cheap crockery  
a symbolic molecular contact  
that could never be a melding  
and in the infinitesimal distance  
lay the chasm of the joke  
that might jolt her when she cleared the table. .

Cathy Inculet

## **the sound of your femininity**

(dual)

Though some would disagree,  
I find the sound of your femininity  
soothing, I close my eyes.  
Dream precipitation dreams  
and know that she is calm again.

Calm! What, me calm?  
Precipitating? Can rain sleet and  
snow all over you!  
Or I can send a soft mist  
to embrace you.

True, you can rain in on me,  
bathe the conscious unconsciousness but,  
the sound of your femininity is soothing  
whether your winter of discontent  
hides in the brambled forest of your love  
or reflects in the still waters.

My femininity is there  
for your choosing,  
for your asking,  
I am glad it soothes you.  
Perhaps like a walk in the forest  
Perhaps like a cool swim with no clothes on.

Forest of my love?  
Oh Come On!  
Who are you trying to impress?  
My love is not a forest,  
It is a single tree which managed to grow  
in a single spot of cultured sunshine.

## **pasta**

She fed him pasta  
and conversation.  
He ate and listened.

Too much at times.  
He wrote his thoughts  
on the gastronomic and  
wanted them published,  
so he could become  
Mr. Globe & Male.

"Have you finished yet?"  
She asked,  
watching him lick his fork  
of herb and spice tomato sauce.

He was surprised  
that she had asked.

Would you like something else  
She asked.

He said no, licked his fork,  
left an unfinished plate  
and sat down to read  
the paper.

Yesterday's news.  
No matter.  
He savoured it as deliciously  
as he had his pasta,  
and with more interest.

She licked her fingers  
but it was only to turn the pages.  
She wasn't pretending to read.

"Yes, I was reading,  
in my heart leading,  
and my friend,  
you were patient,  
and did not consider  
my reading  
as superceding  
our friendship.

Will you lick your fingers to  
turn the pages?  
Or will you consider the pages  
And the licking  
to be indicative to our friendship?  
Lick, my friend.  
Turn pages.

Cathy Inculet

## **I rose up from the bottom**

1  
God Damn it Max!  
2  
O God the railings missing  
3  
I love you leave your wife  
4  
Remember when we recited poetry in the snow  
5  
In the old house there was a fire, I was scared  
6  
I love you where are you  
7  
Climb up and get that wrench out of the tree  
8  
If you can come in and sign the house papers today, I  
10  
Mommy - Daddy  
11 . . .

I rise up from the bottom of the stairs  
crimson eye lid stains on the window sill  
and adam/eve pain in my chest  
to faintly see the cat at the top still  
unmoved, licking her ass as I landed on mine.

### **I thought sex was just for courting**

Really, I thought sex was just for courting,  
for poking the pud after a good meal when  
the flowers you gave her were in her eyes,  
and your mind just wasn't on the wedding  
but wedged in the dark moist of her thighs.

Really, I thought sex was just for courting,  
it's been so long I wondered why she wept,  
and how she wanted to keep it up all night  
when I could have slept and the making  
of marriage would do things up all right.

She's replaced me with the spices of the East  
and oiled her body to be a culinary delight.  
Her cucumber legs and creamy yogurt thighs  
on a pita bread bum can be quite a feast  
but I prefer to work like all the macho guys.

I tried to show her who the boss should be,  
that she should show more respect for me,  
but she fell on my fist and now I'm sulking  
because I thought sex was just for courting.

**her house needed dusting**

(dual)

Generally, she considered the  
mail, to be unimportant.  
Less important than her chairs anyway,

but at least the floors were polished  
and the house was landscaped.

But her house needed dusting  
and her mail needed dusting,  
in that indescribable way  
of frustrating things.

Dusting is such a waste of time, she said,  
like getting the mail everyday.

Was the potted plant too green  
or the thoughts of dusting overblown?  
Who wanted to move the bicycle, anyway?

Darn it all, even the plants are dusty.  
Dusting plants? Don't we have anything  
better to do?  
The bicycle is my business.  
Yes, it's dusty.  
None of your business.

Why is the cat the only one  
in the house that can scratch its back?  
I could if I tried but the Venetian  
blinds are open to the neighbors.

Okay, so I will close the blinds.  
They're pretty dusty anyway,  
and I will try to lick my back . . .  
Just Did It!  
You Missed It!  
Too Late!  
Too bad!

Were you not paying attention?  
To the mail and chairs and the dust  
and me?

The mail is delivered.  
The chairs sat upon.

The dust scattered,  
and I am all of that.

Rooms and rafters, kitchen sink,  
Oh God, I forgot about the tiles,  
and the empty fish tank.  
Screw the dust and put the lid down!  
Shuffle, shuffle. Room to room.  
Trees on the lawn, grass is green,  
so are the walls, golden mailbox,  
Golden shower to wash the dust.

Save the grapes!  
Yes, yes, I'll feed the fish.  
They yell at me.  
You don't need me.

Cat drinks the guppies' water  
and not the guppies themselves.  
Survival of the fittest, but  
my weight loss has my pants  
falling down, scuffing dust.  
No belt, no mail, no more grapes.

My cat drinks the fish water.  
Do you have a problem with that?

If you don't want  
dust  
on your cuffs  
next time, bring a mop!

Sorry,  
I didn't mean to say that.  
You brought your friendship  
and that was more than enough,  
more than receiving mail,  
much better than dust.

I will give you string  
to hold up your pants,  
my friend.  
I will buy you a belt  
if that is what you need.  
As for the grapes,  
they are fungible things.  
I can get some more.  
Be content my friend,

in grapes and love.

Grapes and Love?!

All the while, I've sat on the stairs  
and observed your eating habits,  
cleaning habits . . . but love?

Place a grape in your naval,  
I will eat it.

Show me your vine and I will  
make wine, but love?

Dust that off and your mail box  
will be full, maybe I don't need  
a belt to love your dust,  
your fish. Feel my shadow!  
Bring me my wine! . . . and the mail!

Place a grape  
upon my chair  
my love.

I checked my mail  
and there was no letter from you.

My cat looked at me,  
askance.

I just needed communication  
from someone  
from you  
from a potted plant  
from my cat  
from a fish.

I placed a grape on my chair,  
next to an unopened letter.  
Stairs are funny things,  
they assaulted me once  
or maybe it was caused by the cat,  
no matter.

A shadow being cast  
when one goes up and down  
the stairs.

If no shadow was cast,  
then did I not go up,  
or down, or was sunlight  
the only factor, on my back  
or in my eyes.

Blinded by the thought of high noon?

Nah, they were Venetian blinds,  
slats of light.  
No high noon here.  
Today anyway.  
To someone who used to live here.

I sat and looked at them  
My cat looked at me.  
I don't think the fish cared.

Used to live here? I live here still!  
Among the dust and the clutter  
or your grapevine heart.  
Place the cat on your lap, listen  
to the soft rhythm of the fish tank.  
Close your eyes and feel  
my empathetic love, my letters  
are written on the dust hanging in the air.

When you move from room to room,  
I speak to you, I can be read  
on everything if you just open your heart.  
Sleep and my letters settle on your eye's.  
I touch your skin, taste your sweet wine.

Save the grapes!

## **two jim**

In all the world he did not know  
how to say I love you  
to the ones that mattered the most.

No,

It wasn't that he didn't know how to say it,  
it was that he did not know how to say it so  
that they would understand.

In all the world she did know  
how to say I love you  
to the ones that mattered the most.  
It wasn't that she knew how to say it,  
it was that they did not know it  
when she smiled and her lips didn't move.

But he said it anyway  
to the still lips that screamed I love you.  
Eyes were opaque  
and they became two mouths talking.  
Drum and anvil poised, unused.

I love you.  
Doesn't matter.  
Wait come back,  
I wanted to . . .  
I wanted to . . .  
Never mind

They pulled away from the mirrors, speaking  
thoughts intermingled in time/space  
simultaneous hearts bleeding until  
in person he read her lips, understanding.

She heard his voice vaguely, understanding  
and they stood there  
wanting to hold hands  
both too shy to go first,  
lost in the barrens of closeness.

I love you he thought.  
I love you she thought.  
She smiled, he was looking at her hands.

He could not raise his eyes  
Try as he might  
To look at her eyes

He got to her mouth  
Back to her hands  
Hands mouth hands  
Damn it why wouldn't she look at him

And then he knew  
She didn't need to

### **twelve steps**

Drinking makes me relax  
and the night sky's  
moon shadow every addict smile  
will fade one day soon.

Drinking, pull that moon shadow  
off my shoulders, relax  
my stars, my no sun day  
or all night moon shine.

Only twelve steps to sunlight,  
a day I've not seen  
in a life time of  
drinking. Shall I relax?  
One more time . . .  
One more Time.

### **unfinished poem**

One day more.  
If you would hold me  
One day more  
and do not judge me  
or ask me  
what for.

Before, I just felt  
comfortable.  
Now I just feel naked  
when chatter  
interferes with my fantasies.

Are you naked yet?  
I'm lying here and  
gyrating with the  
overhead fan blowing  
a cool breeze  
toward my lungs.

Cathy Inculet

### **the underbelly of life**

Seeing you in a night shirt  
that hides the underbelly of life  
as if the dark side of jeans  
was not enough to inspire warmth,  
standing half-naked in the shadows  
of my imagination I kneel down  
and kiss the smile that no one sees

### **wrenchly on elias**

There are new roots  
in my yard from the  
not yet a tree, tree.

What life force guides these tendons  
into the rooms when the  
new skin of wood clings  
to the walls. Leaves become  
painted onto the lattice skeleton  
as the not yet a tree, tree  
comes alive.

From the outside of the house  
a light is seen while the flowers  
bloom near the stairs, filling  
the upper rooms with life.  
The not yet a tree, tree  
grows through me.

## **Ann Owl (2001)**

### **Haiku by Ann Owl**

Your souls mouth drinks skin  
sprinkled with salt and freckles,  
brushed by peppered hair

When we awake,  
we brush away soft silver  
tendrils of sleep

## **Haiku for Ann Owl**

Searching for candles  
you circle each empty hole,  
Menorah

the owls  
are not what they seem  
praying for prey

New Year's morning  
and the first ray of light  
snowy owl snowfall

If I had a pen  
I would write a haiku  
about this moment

We are asleep  
far away from each other,  
siamese dreams

When we awake,  
we brush away soft silver  
tendrils of sleep

**Joge Ute Haiku:**

For eight days  
the owl is sleepless  
Hanukkah

Kissing the warm moist  
just below your heart  
where the salt collects,  
your eyes follow the lines  
across the ceiling as the lids  
close slowly over them.  
Swallowing the warm moist  
of your sweet love  
you become part of me.  
Your arching back slowly  
obscures the face as  
you smile, calling my name.

The owl calls  
from her protected nest.  
Oh, a morning dove!

## **Are You Jewish?**

Menorah in hand, you smile,  
soft fingers caress the brass,  
circle each empty hole  
searching for the candles.  
Other than a few close friends  
and circumcision, that's the  
closest I've been to being Jewish.

This menorah balanced in your hand  
was willed to me after the death  
of a friend of my father.

A tailor by trade,  
found sitting in his easy-chair,  
cigarette ashes piled on the rug  
burnt out for three days,  
exactly one year after his wife had died.

The way your face lit up  
when you asked me "Are you Jewish?"  
as you touched the menorah again  
with your finger tips.

What did you expect to find?  
A kindred spirit,  
a religious experience,  
the Torah on my bookshelf?

Well my raven-haired friend,  
when I answered no,  
your soul's candle lost the flame  
that would keep this menorah burning  
into the next millennium or  
flood the Guff with its light  
and this Goy regrets the day  
he was born a Christian.

## **Something Was Missing**

I woke up this morning  
and something was missing.  
Last night I had a dream  
and in the dream the faces  
were not clear but the strength  
and affection was there  
like a familiar and recently  
lost hug and kiss I knew too well  
to not say I really miss you  
and you did not say to  
expect too much  
but what am I to do,  
falling in love with you.

## **In My Room**

Nothing is the same in my room.  
When you step across the threshold  
with bedroom eyes, it's not for the bed.  
You stare everywhere; walls, desk, floor,  
“That wasn't there last week?” “What's that?”  
“Those photos have moved, paintings replaced?”

When you walk further into my domain,  
memories of a hugable love fade and you  
forget to say “Give me some sugar - baby!”,  
Looking for that sweet moist kiss. All you see  
is maybe your name on a sheet of yellow paper.  
My diary near your fingertips - you reach out.  
I follow you in - your hand pulls back.  
Two silhouettes stare down where once stood  
photos of a mutual friend, half-naked and hidden  
somewhere else in the menagerie of this room.

I see you looking at my possessions.  
Fingertips lightly touch the book titles  
on the new black shelves.

My fingertips on the nape of your neck now.  
Your deep thinking eyes close on my room  
and all you see is an image of me  
lifting you up in my strength filled arms,  
pull you into my chest and when I kiss you  
the mystery of your enigmatic smile melts  
and we are the same, in my room.

## **The Ocean Of My Room**

Like a wave on the beach  
in the ocean of my room  
you come crashing against  
the rocks and sandbars  
on the long coastline  
of my mellow shaped body.

Sweeping the headwaters  
as you recede and reshape  
the shoreline with your tongue,  
you reunite the waters last  
recession with a newer one  
and the old coastline  
is youthful and new again.

## **Pudenda**

Oh sweet pudenda  
how moist the freshness is  
forested lingering  
in rooms akin to heaven.

Oh sweet sweet vine  
wrapped around the hearth  
and Bartholin bowl  
of your warm moist skin.

Oh sweet blindness  
I see yet I see not  
reunite Pangea  
ignite the word  
numeohorekakeo  
numeohorekakeo  
numeohorekakeo

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

## **Warm Moist**

With my arms enveloping you  
head against the neck nape  
my tongue stretches down your back  
curves under the warm moist and into  
your womb hearth as you breath in  
and exhale into my cloudy day hair.

## **Why?**

What is the threshold in your life,  
whereby the line is crossed between  
friendship, love, affection, and truth?

When does a kiss kindle embers  
that fires are born from after  
the heat warms up your lips?

How strong is the wall that holds  
trust and mistrust apart as you  
close your eyes and open your heart?

Where do your dreams lead your hand  
when I am not there to guide your  
fingertips at night when you are alone?

Why don't we . . . ?

Shhhh . . . Why not?

## **When you Go**

Did you know that when you go,  
when you leave me, depart from me,  
board a bus or plane without me,  
walk down the sidewalk after I've gone,  
close the door, say goodnight, goodbye,  
drive away in your car along life's highway . . .

You are still there beside me.

## **Your sword**

I like your sword.  
I just have an Epee. I've  
encountered the occasional  
foil and dagger, but I am overwhelmed  
by your Samurai blade.

En guard.  
Thrust.  
En guard, thrust, thrust.  
En guard . . . Oh God!  
Thrust.

## **Your Warmth**

There is something alien about your warmth.  
Claws embed on pre-carriion flesh  
splayed upon the quilted bed,

There is something about your warmth,  
feline eyes find their way in umbric light,  
lips hot with circumcised sweat.

You draw first blood in the vacuum  
of your mouth, inside soft hot cheek skin,  
flagellate tongue and phallic obelisk of love,  
nails & nipples, teeth & skin, sweat & hair, and  
there is something alien about your warmth

## **Going down Goose Lane Toward Broken Jaw:**

Harmonia Press 2005  
Poetry written in 2002 & 2003

Dedication:

for jones upon learning of his suicide:

in a dream  
they become one  
moth and flame

Dedicated also to my old friend Joe Blades [Broken Jaw Press], who lived down the street from me when I was there; Mia, Claudette, and all my new friends and my workmates on the afternoon shift at 203 Waggoners Lane, Canada Post, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

And for Pat Carlson who wrote many poems used in this collection  
“You said hello with goodbye on your lips”

**Haiku from In A Dream:**

Serving Chai  
in the once empty room  
the warmth of you

Stirring noodles  
over the hot oven fire  
sipping tea

Sipping on Green Tea  
across from 'Old Loyalist Cemetery'  
long before Vimy

Fresh coffee  
after love settles the air  
aroma

If I had a pen  
I would write a haiku  
about this moment

Outside Tobique  
Nation Drumming Circle  
Japanese tourist

### **Cora's: At The Window, Behind The Pane**

*(for stephanie)*

behind the counter,  
behind the coffee, eggs,  
scurrying to and fro, tea,  
customers' orders, ins  
and outs, lights, noise,  
cash register jingling,

I catch a glimpse  
of you dreaming, lost  
in another world, not  
the one that inhabits  
this queen street restaurant

where are you my friend  
lost in laughter, somewhere?

## **Going Home**

Sitting here drinking Green Tea,  
listening to Enya on the radio  
and thinking of this crisp cold day.  
One of the many leafless Fall days  
when the grey squirrels are  
the only living beings around.

The blue sky hangs on branches  
across the street at Old Loyalist Cemetery  
where Boer War soldiers and  
early settlers remember summer.  
Their ghosts covered with Fall colors  
as they hibernate for oncoming Winter.

Green Tea warms the body so.  
Pushes the sweat out of my pores.  
I should be off to the Saturday Market  
instead of sipping from this large cup  
in this quiet New Brunswick apartment.

Really, I should be out on the highway  
and on that silver bird from here  
but the soft sounds of Enya, pull me  
back to this warm cup of tea,  
pack my suitcase and leave.

## **Cynthia Bachelor**

As I was leaving London,  
two days before the silver wing flight,  
I wandered through the mall  
and saw you standing there.  
Sleek glass counter ending  
at your elegant dressed body,  
golden hair accenting the beauty of you.  
The room was quiet, and you  
were thinking of something  
or just reading, I don't know  
but there was such a serenity  
in that moment that my intrusion  
to say goodbye would have ruined  
the photography of you.

Now, I think I should have stayed.  
Instead, I stood and waved  
but I will always remember your face  
and your ever created grace.

## **Are You Afraid to Die?**

*(for Linda Ham)*

I sit at work tonight  
among the postal sort cases and  
wonder if the question should have been,  
“am I afraid to live?”

To Live: to create, to enjoy, to be oneself,  
to be proud of creating and of just being.

At home I sit and type.  
Typing well worn and often unreadable handwriting.  
Creativity and life,  
creativity and living, but what  
am I afraid of, if I am indeed afraid?

Being here alone is not  
as nice as walking across the street  
with someone you love or sharing things  
in a moving car. Dinner for two.  
There are memories out there.

Now I just think of coming home, I  
just need to be there  
after five months in this forested province,  
homesick for friends.

## **What If... You Walk by Me**

*(Written by Heather Lehay)*

What if ... you walk by me  
your eyes teased by another  
could I approach you from behind  
with the same intensity?

What if ... I lower my head  
would you see eyes teasing yours,  
top of head would not say the same thing.  
What if... I see a weak smile, followed by  
groping for something to say, my words  
sounding hollow in my head.

What if... all you see is someone in the  
distance and your eyes say  
you wish it were me.

## **The Bed Creaks From My Weight... Alone**

*(Written by Heather Lehay)*

The bed creaks from my weight ... alone,  
Another word has caressed my soul,  
My feet get cold, my hands sweat,  
Another word finds it mark.

A pause, silence steals time,  
Another word could caress my soul,  
I breathe in ... waiting.  
Powerful, caressed by each word.

Does he know that the pen  
is mightier than the sword?  
I move just enough to breathe  
No sound escapes from the pause.

Words have failed me again.  
In time will words be actions?  
Take me in your arms.  
Let actions replace the words.

The bed creaks from the weight.  
A pause ... to steal time,  
let it be actions not words  
that caress my soul.

**Between Sips of White Wine**  
*(For Lilli Ferguson and Joe Blades)*

On Valentine's Day,  
between sips of white wine  
that can reveal too much  
of my life at times,  
I enjoy the company of friends  
and think about the ocean,  
waves that pushed my life  
from the Pacific coastal waters  
to splash upon my Grandparent's  
Atlantic Fundy shores.

On Valentine's Day,  
at this table set for three,  
a blood-red, two-tiered cake  
covered in flowers, waits the knife.

A sip of wine, a poet's words,  
a smile, and thoughts of home  
as my new friend reaches out  
slices cake at each pink flower,  
and we dissolve the petals  
on our tongues and go home alone.

## In a Dream

In a dream, climbing brick steps  
with their talus slope of chips,  
I carry an old Penny-farthing,  
my feet slip on the way up and  
the bicycle drops to the ground.

Now, the wall is gone and I  
descend the narrow bricked angle  
to the bottom, sliding, slipping  
into a high-ceilinged basement.  
Brick steps now a crumbling chimney.

I am covered in dust, head to foot  
with my 1994 journal in my left hand  
open to a blank page in May  
with only one penned entry:

*where is the here and now?,  
the why and when of my journey?  
Where did the wind blow my friends?  
Where is the lost spirit that  
inhabits the mortal soul? . . .*

the perpetual unanswered question.

## **Whippitt Lounge**

At the tavern on a Friday night  
(if you can remember the tavern,  
or the night for that matter),  
dancing with your shoes off, amongst  
the college kids, girating and groping  
one other as if it were they, who  
had discovered darkness and rhythm.  
Your middle-aged eyes closed a moment,  
expanding a college memory of your own,  
running naked on the beach, or  
breathing in your first kiss long ago.

Beer sloshing in your brain, sweat,  
smoke, muscles, breasts, ashtrays,  
and you lean back in your chair,  
wake up in your own bed, alone,  
call your best friend at noon  
on the Saturday to find out why  
your pockets are empty and your car  
is parked safe but sideways  
in the driveway after that Friday night.

### **Ann Valavaara**

This April winter has me bewildered.  
Sleet rain and the trees are ice-laden,  
falling down around town, chainsaws  
reflected in the glassy branches.

When the noises of the city cease  
and you close your eyes, let the cold wind  
pink your cheeks, you can hear the  
crack, crack, crack of the ice on wood.

This April winter has me remembering  
a high school sweetheart, midwinter  
freezing rain, near midnight and the city  
under two inches of glass. Crunched walking  
the sidewalk under near breaking wires  
and trees. Walking her home, hand in hand,  
first kiss beneath a frozen moon.

## **The Stain on The Road**

Several neighbors gathered  
around my car today  
under the moist grey clouds,  
as I leaned against the door.  
The stain on the asphalt  
fresh, wet, ran uphill and  
someone asked how it was to be,  
that road stain near the motor,  
near the tire, near my car.

Well, I said, staring down,  
pointing across the street  
to where I had earlier carried  
her milch-filled body;

Well, I said:  
“Once upon a time  
there were three little kittens  
and a mother and a van.  
Now there are only  
three little kittens.  
Everyone else is gone.”

## **Banting Building U of T**

Along the stone wall, Banting  
Building, beside the street car tracks,  
Prince Charles and Princess Diana  
immortalized for almost a decade  
in dark paint printed in huge  
letters, criticizing either the marriage  
or the divorce.

Prince Charles' opinion would be  
in opposition to Diana's on the present graffiti,  
replacing years of power washing  
the old one, to become a clean wall.

Charles would uphold the present  
British government's stand on  
the crisis in the Middle East but I  
can see Diana's fist in the air,  
smiling to the television and yelling  
"Stop the war in Iraq!" long after  
someone had written "Stuff the wedding!"

## **Sam**

when at first we see  
things of no mere mediocrity  
and the void is filled from within  
where once stood no thought of sin  
and the eyes come close to light  
and arms come down from heights  
to wrap around you in the night  
and ghosts of good lovers hover near  
to comfort you from fear  
and wake you from morning sleep  
where once alone, now never weep

### **Not Looking to Be Protected**

### **From Liking You**

*(For Sam K)*

Not looking to be protected from liking you.  
No need to guard the house from your heart.  
Nor build a fence around my soul and skin.  
No more protection from liking you, looking  
for the lost key you just found in my mailbox.  
I had been reading the letters backward and  
the mail man was always coming to the door  
slipping nothings through the slot until  
I found you tearing down the heart wall to my house.

**My Dear Friend**  
(after a poem for her)

My dear friend -

you write words inspired  
by a moment shared,  
what then could I ask,  
if a lifetime be bared?

A minute in passing  
were we allowed to partake,  
but thoughts that lingered,  
now we have to forsake.  
Worlds apart,  
I hesitated to explain,  
for in doing so  
I sweetened the pain.

Understand my friend -

I too share those dreams  
you write of in sensuous rhyme;  
*arms that wrap around me each night,*  
I pray I will feel in time.  
Yet reading once more the words on the page,  
I tarry over a line that was penned  
and cannot fathom the thoughts clouding your mind,  
when 'ghosts of lovers' you did send.  
For if you knew these demons  
that keep me from you,  
you'd have erased writing of such sorrow  
and left with thoughts of *comforting me from fear*,  
and *where once alone, now never weep*, to follow.  
So my dear friend -

I bid you good-bye, memories etched of that day  
yearning to spend many more of the same,  
and if, God willing, you should wander back here,  
you'll find the window lit with a flame.  
And I am asking you, please be patient for now  
and see what destiny brings us in time,  
and if ever you write words inspired by us,  
please leave all my skeletons behind.

Sam K. /03

## **Sego Road**

*(For Maryanne Sego)*

I miss you he said  
to the open road, where  
you were not there in  
the seat beside me.

Hand extended to hold  
a memory of you.

Driving the highway home  
to the door of your heart.

Friendship Highway 101,  
two lanes, both directions  
but the signs are blurred  
on the other side,  
on mine, clear as sky, signs  
with your name and the  
remaining mileage to your door.

Stopping periodically for gas.

## You Cannot Give a Heart

### That Has Been Taken...

(online collaboration poem with  
Maryanne Sego: for Harry Gately)

you cannot give a heart that has been taken ...  
a thief crept quietly into the night ...  
what I'm left with is merely part of who i am ...  
an open cage empty with the weight of tears  
for one last kiss...one fleeting moment to kiss ...  
or a moment before the lips part  
and the eyes open on memory  
how loudly the silence pounds  
echoing through a darkness that never lingers  
just remember to breathe my heart silently sings  
and that is all that remains  
the shadow of love, the setting sun,  
waning moon gathering shadows about you  
to keep you warm at night  
from the people you call friends  
the drums of singers ...wails the longing ...  
skin of hand, touch of soul, breath of breast  
each time he hits the skin ...the echoes of a hollowness.  
trying to find a way to fill the void ...  
the universe echoes and the void is too great  
hit the skin, hit the skin again hear me  
oh God listen to my cry  
cause there is nothing left behind that skin,  
to hurt no more ...  
beaten down ... and torn ... bleeding ...  
there are no gods...  
merely words ... formed by man...  
worn by women on threaded hearts  
to provide a false fortitude ...to be a lie  
my gardens are filled with roses, and  
black-eyed susans...  
Susan's petal's falling down around her ankles ...  
thorns long ago tearing at the flesh,  
skin of my love  
the winds blow from across the bay ...thrashing her.  
blows hard and cold on this sun filled day  
burning memory on my breast  
just needs a bit of water is what  
the neighbours say  
wear the ragged shirt outside ... let them see ...  
let them see what he has done to me ...  
ragged shirt  
torn and bleeding ...my lips locked shut ...

i cannot speak..  
damn you all ... cant you see ...  
but I continue to beat the skin  
cause the sound is not heard  
watch the rose flowers continue to fall  
petals ... of bleeding red ... purple and blue  
under the cedar tree the swing that was made ...  
swings back and forth ... with no one inside ...  
and the cedars are bereft of bird song  
save the swing creaking in the wind  
no noise now, now love, no heart sound  
save the beating of the skin  
only flower petals gathering the dew in early morn  
beating skin, beat in skin beat and the neighbours  
walking by as they always do every morn  
yes ... take this skin and toughen me like leather ...  
rip off the shirt and beat my breasts hard  
neighbours know not my pain my deep  
deep refrain this song of the void ... his song  
I am but a mandrake ... to you ... a woman  
you tell what to do...  
lost in the cow towing of generations of obedience  
and you do not see this, this self serving  
the flowers bloom only for you there is no we  
the wind blows only to cool your brow  
I've asked you to set me free ... .  
but you say you love me  
black-eyed lazy susan's drop  
their seeds to the ground  
and you as the bright light in my life  
leave a sunburn on my heart  
quietly ... silently ... the rains fall  
and wash them down  
quiet, silent, falling like a veil  
like my memories ... seeping ...  
I take off the ragged shirt  
since others don't see ...  
they continue to gather their seeds  
for the next spring..  
they pack up their cars ... their belongings..  
head back to the city ... a  
nd the doors are not locked  
and my womb lies barren  
for your seed falls on other soil  
fertilizes the other grass,  
not in this garden of life.

**Mother's Day 2003 For Cris 25/12/78**

Waiting for the spring rains  
to clear the last of the snow,  
and make way for the summer  
this day is so cloudy cold.

Sipping Irish Cream at Second Cup  
across the wet street from Goose Lane Editions,  
thinking about younger brother born  
half a century ago, this Mother's Day.

Not here to enjoy the East coast sun  
or this heavy cleansing precipitation  
or a loving Mother who remembers  
what this day is really for; you and me.

If I close my eyes I see two boys  
in an East Coast memory, running  
home for lunch, from the beach  
where she will always call our names.

## **Every 13,000 Years**

The day the Earth listened  
to her own heartbeat sleep,  
all too rhythmic shorelines pulse,  
river veins fed ocean tide.

The day the Earth listened  
to her labored sky-filled breathing,  
village and city scarred skin and  
to the endless grains of Human sand,  
an ulcer burned in her molten mantle:

steamed breath crept up  
air rose in Eros  
geysers melted glaciers  
ocean filled river beds and more  
tectonic plates shifted to form new skin.

The day the Earth listened  
to her own heartbeat sleep,  
the grains of Human sand become one  
with the veins of ocean tide,  
her redesigned skin,  
wet with the wealth of water  
absorbed their pulse of history with Hers.

The day the Earth was listening,  
She shifted on her axis, exchanging Poles  
in her symbiotic journey around Mother Sun.

## **Narcoleptic Somnambulist**

At the edge of the yard where she  
fell asleep standing in the sun,  
the Trumpet Vine crawled up  
her shoes and crept around her ankles  
gently making its way up both her legs  
in the hot summer sun and twisted across  
her thighs, Trumpet Vine bloom  
just below her navel. Orange blossoms.  
No Fairies here, no dancing, just joy  
and soft breathing narcoleptic things,  
as the vine slid around her breasts  
from where a bead of sweat softly fell.  
She smiled in her dreams, felt his arms  
around her body and as the vine  
inched and inched upward she thought,  
what a gentle kiss upon my neck,  
as she became covered in blossoms,  
he whispered "isle of view" in her ear.  
She began to wake and thought of walking.  
The Trumpet Vine eased off her skin  
and slid to her feet as she only saw  
the hose in her hand and water  
flooding the garden as the Earth listened.

*Unlocking The Muse*, Beret Days Press, 2005

## **Wiccan Wedding**

*(Carol) (later for Sandy & Mardy)*

Upon wakening, ivory-handled dagger  
placed silver edge near my heart.  
Five bronze double-edged daggers  
random placement: arms, legs, tummy, breast.  
I see you through the thin veil placed  
across my sleep encrusted eyes, cloaked  
in a crimson gown I had not seen before.  
My hands are not tied but I cannot move.  
You are holding a sword and reading  
words I don't understand or recognize.  
Oh to be a dream or in a dream,  
to be a shadow on the ceiling more than this!  
Secrets unfolding in the morning air,  
but your eyes are calm and I feel more trust  
than the thrust of a dagger conjured up  
in my waking wondering wandering mind.  
Then I see the candles placed around the bed  
and the white flowers draped in pearls,  
you, holding out the two silver rings,  
the ceiling light forming a halo around  
your head and now I remember saying "I do."

## **His Words Don Wings**

(after a poem for her)

His words don wings;  
flights started with a flutter of sorrow,  
end with a quivering touch  
a touch too deep for even his own imagination  
to mine from the belly of text.

He answers his own questions of misgivings  
about love gone awry through his poems  
of angst and pain,  
a pain shielded only by his armour  
of paper and Montblanc Sword.

He pens of places he has yet to visit  
and thoughts he has yet to form;  
a hereafter cast of memories -  
memories of what was and will be again,  
time after page.

He sits alone and reads his words,  
blurring the dots above the i's;  
this is his life as it was once before -

before he touched the pain  
of a memory.

Sam K/ 03

### **Dante's Sister**

(for Marie Alighieri aka Charlene Elsby Coe)

As I slowly turn to stone  
Since for me you are gone  
My heart shall be the last  
To become this icy glass  
Lips once warm will slowly die  
Never again a you and I  
But through my eyes you may see  
A memory once of you and me.

Photo poem Wikimedia Commons

### **Romeo & Juliet: prick of the dagger**

(For Sam's knife collection)

Pray tell thy dagger sting  
shall stay thy sheath and harbor well.  
A dagger sheathed is only for show,  
A dagger unsheathed is the dagger I know.  
Embedded just below the skin,  
save the thrust of sin,  
a dagger blade is sure to shine,  
and yet the thrust is so sublime  
so as to hide the tears of blood  
and rub the skin such,  
as a dagger blade slides so close  
to touch but not tear thy lust,  
and as she lay, the dagger hidden,  
a sword she dreams  
but dreams are forbidden,  
his blade inserted in her sheath,  
blooded together two and as one,  
red heart's liquid drains their sun.  
She ran her blade down his back  
and there upon the skin attack.  
Blood red track, two blades front and back,  
silvered handled sheath and all  
and as she fell so did he fall,  
embedding daggers one and all  
and in the ecstasy of death  
did she see his blade  
in her hearts forever shade.  
Be sweet death and life once sown  
for daggers deep they have known  
And sleep in quiet peace, together sewn.

## **Goodbye on Your Lips**

(Written by Pat Carlson)

You said hello with goodbye on your lips.  
Reaching out from inside your sparsely furnished room,  
Your heart in search of someone,  
Your life's direction neglected.

Reaching out, the universe responding ,  
I find the "poet guy,"  
who is my shadow.  
Recognizing my needs; to touch, to be touch,  
to talk, to listen, to share, to feel.

Is it safe for two people to be together,  
who fall in love so easily?  
You with your cave dwelling ways  
and me with the world to save.

Problem solver and procrastinator, dare they mix?  
I ask the question knowing full well,  
the answer leads to tears.

At that moment,  
Yet to come,  
When goodbye must be said,  
Will you also cry with me?

I think so.

### **A Whisper on The Wind**

*Hearing about my missing friend,  
and Wayne leaving.  
(Written by Pat Carlson)*

Hearing your voice,  
a whisper on the wind,  
angels breathing softly  
in my ear.

Dreams, reality missing  
consciousness lapsing  
fate or faith restoring,  
replacing,  
remaking,  
resounding.

When last I heard your voice,  
I gasped and have not yet taken  
a new breath.

**(The Sequel)**  
**Upon Parting**  
*(Written by Pat Carlson)*

Will you remember me,  
When Fall touches down in London?  
Will your lips remember the touch and feel of our kiss,  
when last you wanted me?

Linger here a little longer,  
while fire burns in your loins,  
and you reach out for me with passion,  
not regret.

Touch me with your soft strength,  
that I may remember your embrace,  
that hot, summer day in June.

Kiss me now, not with goodbye on your lips,  
as you once did.  
But, instead, with disappointment in your leaving.

**Temporary Lovers**  
*(Written by Pat Carlson)*

Awakening I did not want you gone,  
Fall was months away,  
and I could enjoy you 'til then.

Suddenly, your news arrived.  
Tomorrow became today,  
future became present.  
Yet, I am not ready to say goodbye.

Will you be my lover,  
ere you go?  
The door just opened remains ajar.  
The heart awaits on hinges.

**Dustless Road**  
*(for Pat Carlson)*

Down the wet and dustless road,  
came a stranger dancing so,  
wanting to let his burden go,  
stopped but once to lighten his load.

On a path which led not far,  
from dustless road to garden shed,  
he was in want to lay his head,  
and gaze by evening upon a star.

Wondering about the life he had,  
always dancing to hide the sad,  
the smiles that wash away the mad,  
dustless roads that made him glad.

The birds were chirping in the air,  
dragon flies feeding up above,  
robins thinking of only love,  
the stranger woke without a care.

To find a lady beside his bed,  
morning sun reflecting in her hair,  
wild roses 'round them everywhere,  
and he knew why here, he had been led.

## **The Chess Board of Life**

*(Written by Pat Carlson)*

The Chess Board,  
temporarily positioned  
anticipating the next move.  
In stillness it awaits  
the challenge,  
the game.

Your move, you retreat  
as London calls,  
no castling allowed.

Each player takes its turn,  
as one by one the game succumbs  
to the insights of the mind.  
Leaving no chance for winners  
as the King surrenders,  
to his past.

*(Wayne is moving in 5 days)*

## **Locust**

(for Marie Alighieri aka Charlene Elsby Coe)

When he found her, barely breathing,  
bound to the trunk of the Black Locust,  
he pulled her spine pricked body down  
to rest on the green green grass, red  
blood seeping slowly from her white skin.

On her back, on the ground, breathing.  
He slowly laid her down, breathing,  
and wondered how and when and why.  
The blue sky will tell no secrets,  
the wind listens but has blown by.  
Rocks and trees absorb words but he  
could not see past blood stained skin, and wept.

This hard pain, locust needle pricking,  
willows weeping, pines pining, spruce  
gum forming amber while Dawn Redwood  
gave up her branches to heal the wounds.

He placed her on her back, on the grass  
and laid the redwood branches to cover  
her skin and pain and watched in quiet awe  
as they absorbed the red blood and stains.

And though she was alive and free  
of the locusts' barbed black kiss,  
she awoke under the star filled sky,  
coils of rope still tied to her wrists.

*Trees of Surprise*, BlazeVox Buffalo, New York, 2007

*Unlocking The Muse*, Beret Days Press, 2005

*Van Gogh's Ear* V. 5 French Connection Press, Paris, France/Detroit, USA 2006

**Talking to Friends**  
*(For Samantha Squire)*

Too many months you've felt alone  
even with the noise of so-called friends  
pulling you from near to far.

Too many months you've felt alone  
in a crowded chat room, names  
confused by software & hard drives.

Too many months you've faced alone  
the monitor screen, keyboard, cam,  
passing up the clear blue sky.

If you took the time to close off  
and see the reflection in front of you  
you would see me just behind the chair,  
hand reaching out for your shoulder.

**Room Mates: Samantha & Jen S.**

Sitting in the Community Health Clinic  
between unrelated drug-induced  
conversations, crack cocaine and  
long-term tardive dyskinesia & schizophrenia,  
trying to outdo each other amongst  
the alcoholics, deviants and the all  
too busy Public Health Nurses, I wait  
patiently for two hours just to be a friend.

I was thinking of you and your  
calm face, standing patiently as well,  
right hand stirring the slow pasta,  
awaiting my return, late for lunch.

**George!**  
*Poets For Peace*

What is it you saw or didn't see  
when you walked into that country,  
blinded by glory  
the ins and outs  
lights and oil  
sand and stone  
Burkha and bazooka.

What is it you saw or didn't see  
before dropping terror on that innocent country,  
sitting in a tavern on that Friday night,  
if you can remember the tavern  
or the night for that matter,  
planning everyone else's life.  
It was the night before giving the orders:  
GO TO WAR! KEEP THE PEACE!

You thought you were protecting  
the world from terrorists,  
forcing your democracy on  
Allah Akbar,  
inflaming the Arab Fatwah  
captured on Al Gazirah.

**George!!**  
Believe me when I say  
you won't be remembered for your vision  
as Commander in Chief  
of the US Military and Coalition of the Willing.

You think you are every man  
and all men, except the French  
whom you now despise,  
so I guess you will never come  
across Voltaire who wrote about you  
200 years ago when he said:

**"Every man is guilty of the good  
he did not do"**

## **Letter Home from a Body Bag**

This is my last letter home,  
just enough time to say goodbye  
to dad and mom, all my friends,  
roses in the hedge,  
the street corner poet selling words,  
the street corner church selling words,  
the street walker selling words.

This is to be my last letter home,  
to Tom, Dick, Sally, Fred, Spot and Sue.  
If I could only be there to see the looks  
on their faces but I'm going to war  
and they wouldn't recognize me  
or my street corner face.  
My camouflaged face.

This should be my last letter home,  
where in my old bedroom sat my trunk  
filled with old letters, old dreams,  
uniform and ammo case, journals.  
No one will read them because I never  
sparked a magic fire in their hearts  
strong enough to melt the stones and ice  
in their illiterate minds

Is this my last letter home,  
where, when I was there, the light was on,  
the day I ran away to join the war.  
Reach out and read me.  
Read my books, plays, poetry,  
never more those false smiles when I call.

This is to be my last letter home,  
one copy to you, one to her and  
one to each friend who greeted me first,  
smiled, saved a life, shared my feelings for peace.  
Anyone who is better now  
than when they started,  
one to the clubs I belong to  
and the ones I wanted to,  
and maybe one to some of your friends.

This should be my last letter home,  
to ask for love, world of freedom.  
Can you say luck?  
No, to you a soldier is a distant thing,

to me it's duty at all cost, people,  
death, dogs, acid rain, diamonds in the rough.

Is this my last letter home?  
You're damn right it is and you know it!  
I've been hiding my feelings on paper,  
writing between the lines of all my  
poems, stories, plays, trying to reach only you.  
Wanting you to say, I understand...  
I know I understand you... really I do.

YOU'LL COME TO MY GRAVE STONE  
WHERE I WILL FOREVER BE ALONE  
HOLDING THIS LETTER  
BROUGHT FROM HOME  
STILL THINKING IT'S ONLY ANOTHER POEM

## **Back at the Post Office in London**

(January 2004)

Over the years, sitting,  
sorting mail at the Post Office in London,  
looking, at the postcards, dwelling,  
on peoples lives and thoughts,  
I see the same thing every day.  
A single line stroked through  
an address, "deceased",  
written upon it by the letter carrier.  
Five days before New Years,  
seven million letters this Christmas,  
thinking about him this season.  
One letter out of how many?  
One letter in an unknown hand.  
One damn piece of paper, my hand  
shaking, gasped breathing, never  
a vision until now, one damn letter  
in shaking penmanship written  
beside the crossed out address . . .  
my dad is dead.

## **Collaboration poetry with A.G. (2007)**

### **Alice**

Alice, I had a dream last night  
that you wrote me a poem  
and I woke up at 5am after  
being out till 3am looking  
for it in the dark.

I ran over to the computer  
and in the early light  
of morning read all my mail,  
went through all my notes,  
but your poem was not there.  
Then, waking in your smell,  
smiling at the memory of you,  
I realized it was all a dream  
but wondered why I was  
laying naked on my doorstep  
in the cold under the moon.

## **Your Love Like Balm**

Drink in your love like balm  
inhale your skin like ether  
dreading what I know will come  
kiss me goodnight and  
like a skilled surgeon wielding scalpel  
sever my heart  
without scratch or nick  
and I  
long trained as your assistant  
pocket my heart and go home

A.G.

## **What Would Be Better Than Loving A Mermaid**

She floats beneath the surface  
darkness deep-en-ing  
wait with tide alone with moon.

Goddess of the sea  
pale gray eyes and abalone  
cry with tide moan with moon.

Fingers move with suck of waves  
she craves a net to pull him down  
lust with tide ache with moon.

His mouth against her aching deep  
lungs on fire with captured breath  
tongue so sweet and warm and wet  
drowns with tide dies with moon.

A.G.

### **Response to Mermaid**

Tongue in hand,  
dreaming of your underbelly,  
thong against lips,  
beard stubble grinding  
pleasurable pain on clitoris,  
cock-hard little thing  
waiting to vibrate over and over again,  
searching for the mermaids hole,  
sucking in under water, you  
mermaid, breathe while I  
practice drowning in your fluid love,  
oblivious to the possible intrusion,  
slip my hand down your jeans  
to sample the other side of light.

### **How am I supposed to get any work done?**

I may be small but I am a giant,  
hunger and rage and beat at my breast,  
thunder and storm lash against my legs  
while I sleep, gnash my teeth  
and rail against heavens  
ache, and fail to  
slake my lust for  
carnal love.

A.G.

## **When I am alone**

When I am alone  
I a brazen woman fevered  
eyes wide shut, you  
hard spread me wide  
your moth, mine babbling  
bigbigbigohgod and come  
but when across the room  
think, who is this man and why  
wanting aching to be worshiped heart in hand  
feel novel kisses from questioning soul  
taste new love with tired heart.  
Heart trips a little at the door  
press spine against steel  
hard and cold  
and gather my nerve  
to go in.

A.G.

## **Pavlov's Dog**

Slept in this Sunday Morning and  
two or three vehicles drove down  
the small dirt and gravel lane behind  
my apartment beside my window.  
Each and every time I thought  
it was you pulling in to park, knock,  
enter the darkened space I call home.  
Each time a car rolled by I projected  
an erectile under the covers and you  
were not knocking on my door,  
interloper of love, disquieter of quiet,  
seasoned veteran of surprise visits.

In my mind I opened the door to you,  
blindfolded your eyes, cuffed your hands  
behind your back and pulled your pants  
to the floor with my teeth, jammed  
your hips between my mouth and the wall,  
as the sixteen year-old punker chick from  
the upstairs apartment came out of her door  
on the way to church like a good little girl  
and went down the lane with bad girl thoughts.

## **Hole In My Apple Jeans**

Oh joy, oh bliss,  
to wait on tender hooks,  
to find you waiting and liking me.  
You are the record-keeper.  
Lust and tears are my constant companions,  
my heart aches, is this being forty?  
My sexual peak? I'm tired  
and we haven't even started.  
Put a hole in my apple jeans  
for your finger should we hug  
panty-less, find the tip of your hand  
between my legs, I hug your arm,  
grit my teeth and scream your name.

Oh God, oh God - damn  
lust and your fingers cream  
my apple jeans to sauce, hot  
tree shaking, leaves shaking,  
you melt down to your knees  
and lick the apple of my love,  
raise up and your rising  
fits between my legs and into the  
apple jean hole your fingers made.  
Cock-lift me up to your waist,  
arms around the door frame,  
legs around your hips,  
I shake and we kiss.

A.G.

## **Your Heart**

I ache for you  
your heart against my heart,  
the length of your body on mine  
nipples like pebbles as  
your heart softens my bones  
spreads me wide, fills every hungry crevice  
cleaves me in two, then mends me  
lungs bursting, coming up for air,  
fill me so I can remember  
what it's like to love someone.

A.G.

## **Did You Miss Me When I Was Gone?**

Mr. Ray, did you miss me

when I was gone?

Touch pillow

where I lay

my head in your lap,

hands describing drama.

Did you miss me

when I was gone?

Things unsaid

crouch in

TV-lined darkness,

feel dull ache

as we parted.

Did you miss me

when I was gone?

Shadow of a kiss on

your mouth

wanting more,

tongue too guilty to ask.

Did you miss me

when I was gone?

Engine noise

fades away

down alley

to late-winter street.

Did you

miss me?

A.G.

## **Old Friends**

We'll be old friends

sit in your tiny kitchen

drinking oolong

from the teapot I bought you

for your birthday

laugh uproariously at our own joke

share poetry and stories

while the cat purrs under the table

and your warm toe

caresses the naked arch

of my foot.

A.G.

## I Don't Get You

I must admit  
that sometimes  
I don't get you.  
We're not always speaking  
the same language,  
inhabiting Babel.  
Sometimes the link  
beyond lust  
seems tenuous,  
yet other times seems  
more than enough.

I had deemed you unresponsive  
again,  
and being busy  
had decided not to call you  
until you responded to me.  
I guess this poem  
written by you to me  
deserves some response.  
Shall I call you  
tonight?

Does this make true  
the perception  
that to lay with  
someone you barely know  
is unwise?  
But the unknowing  
makes my heart race  
and my senses melt  
remembering the touch  
and your body  
against mine,  
and really  
how would it be possible  
to know each other  
better  
than I know you  
and you know me?

A.G.

## **I Fantasized About You**

I fantasized about you  
with the long dripping muzzle  
of a grey wolf, yellow eyes,  
hungrily licking and licking,  
nose up my little red riding skirt . . .  
You could smell my desire miles away . . .  
Dreaming under a tree in the woods . . .  
And you woke me up with your tongue . . .  
After all, isn't that what  
little red riding hood is all about?

A.G.

## **Response to Little Red Riding Hood**

Then I swept away that dream and flew  
above you, talons exposed, hovering  
like a banded grey hawk, eyeing  
the raw meat between your legs, from high.  
Thirsty and swooping in on your hot skin  
I can feel the throbbing labia worm I desire,  
clamp claws in your thighs,  
tail in your screaming face,  
beak ripping at your oval loins, little worm  
torn from its hole, your eyes next to be pecked.

## **Look Toward Nine**

Look toward nine,  
drive towards you  
on secret streets,  
kiss you in warm light,  
big strong man  
to please me,  
wrap hot tongue around you,  
hold you in shivering ecstasy.

A.G.

## **Response to Toward Nine**

Waiting in silent darkness, a  
small rectangular window light  
seeps evening in my warm room,  
waiting in silent darkness  
thinking of you driving here  
to knock upon secret street doors  
open to the cold cold air,  
your warmth and sunlight melts  
my heart, builds the heat  
of penetrating cockiness I exude,  
lifting you up, my mouth on yours.

## **The Back Of Love**

I dream only  
of the back of love,  
end of all things,  
darkest alley,  
third door  
where I shiver  
under your power.

Yes, kiss me there  
but don't linger . . .  
Past the entrance  
you'll find another,  
you ask and  
it will open  
to your gentle  
insistence.

Then,  
tongue and mouth  
on dry lips that should  
never be kissed  
I cringe with shame,  
desire blooms like  
a black orchid  
and I stumble  
heading for the fall.

I must admit  
I don't dream  
of your face  
but your hands at my waist,  
bend me forward,  
teeth at my nape  
and teach me  
the back of love.

A.G.

## Atlanta Poems (2001)

### **I Have a Secret Life**

*(for Billie Selman)*

When I arise and dress in this  
holy place near Stone Mountain,  
I wonder why the past has clasped  
your wrists and bound you to this place?

Goddess, Gaia, you are light  
in this temple where you sleep  
arms folded across your gentle heart.  
At your feet I remain your servant,  
yet hold the key to your salvation.  
In a dream you see the answer questioned  
as I rise from this place where you sleep.  
That breeze you feel upon your cheek  
my friend, is I, the sound of one hand clapping.

### **If I Thought That You Were Right For Me**

*(for Cris Original)*

If I thought that you were right for me  
and my mind was clear of debris,  
how would I phrase this greeting and  
how would the words maintain closure:  
I don't know how much I like you.  
I like you, how much I don't know  
I know you, don't I like you much?  
I like you, I don't know how much.  
I don't know much, you I like.  
I don't know you.  
How much don't I like you.  
Don't I like you?  
I don't like you.  
I like you.  
I don't know.

It was easier to love you when I  
didn't have to worry about liking you.  
That distancing from home was easier  
because of the unfamiliar faces of love.  
Darkness veils feelings and amplifies sounds  
the heart makes when laying on the beach.  
Come to me my man in white  
and kiss me in the morning light

come and sing and come and play  
with you beside me shall I lay,  
bring me flowers and bring me home  
far from this place where I'm alone  
I'll go to be alone again, to dream  
my dreams of invisible men.

### **Barriers**

(for Cris Original)

Well, that barrier is down  
crumbled defensive walls  
lay all around the campfire  
and the loons evening call  
closes the gap left open.

Time that once wounded all heals  
now heals all wounds and  
my arms like tree dreams  
sweep away the downed barriers  
that once separated our thoughts.

We nest on the beachhead  
not far from the campfire that  
burns brighter to heat up the night.

## You Can't Go Home Again

(for Dinah Estes)

In the cool green Alabama April  
while five birds of morning sing,  
each a different song of spring,  
I find myself in contemplation.

The past has come to meet me  
while four birds of morning sing,  
friends from my recent memory sleeping  
came through the soft leaves, creeping.

The sun rose above the forest mantle  
while three birds of morning sing,  
songs of tears and memory deepening  
while I try to remember everything.

Soft hand on my shoulder now  
while two birds of morning sing  
and the misted ghosts drift away  
taking with them everything.

Quiet now on a friend's back porch  
after the last bird of morning sang  
and I awoke from restless sleep  
older, wiser and renewed again.

## London Poems (2005-2013)

### Double Immigration

(for B. Usmanova)

Was it the words left unsaid that kept you laughing,  
or the thoughts before the smile?

The mouth is blind as  
the tongue speaks insights  
into the thread bare soul  
and we lay our lives out  
for each other to see and taste.

After the dinner is done.

After the white wine sipped.

After the lips part language,

I am lost and found.

You are lost from home, that

double immigration

that brought you here, but

you are not alone, memories

and new friends in this new land

stretch a smile across your face.

The coffee is getting cold  
while your delicate fingers touch the cup  
that only thinks about touching your lips.

We finish telling each other stories  
distracted from the truth.

Was it the words left unsaid that kept you laughing  
or the thoughts before the smile?

*Earth Songs*, The Ontario Poetry Society, 2002

## **Covent Garden Market**

I was thinking about the rain  
and how noisy the Market was  
in a quiet contemplative way  
and feeling the loneliness of flowers.

Then like a full blown storm,  
a Zen of synchronicity,  
at least a dozen old friends  
dropped by and made me realize  
that inanimate though they are,  
flowers are never alone and we are  
all flower children in the rain,  
huddled here in the market.

A thousand people reached out,  
eyes closed to this field of humanity  
and friends around us.

## **The Light That Lands:** (for Lynn Pellerin)

There is a light that lands  
at my footsteps as I wander  
round this enigmatic world.  
So bright sometimes AI cannot see.  
So mellow sometimes I dream I see.  
So clear sometimes I can see me.

The light that lands  
at my footsteps is the Sun  
and guides me through my life.

What really pushes me on  
and keeps my soul in tune  
is when I look up and realize  
I'm dragging along the Moon.

## **Ted Plantos**

Sitting here listening to Dylan  
and thinking about what Plantos had said . . .  
“Where are all the thirty-five year old’s now  
that were like us when we were 35,  
organizing and writing and protesting . . .”  
as the ‘times they are a changing’  
entered my nostalgic brain.  
But now, I am just thinking about  
where are all the friends now  
that were with us when we were 35?

Ted Plantos has gone posthumous  
and no longer in reprint, while  
Valentine’s Day was unkind to Jones.  
Concrete and taxis failed Shaunt  
and Acorn has dropped from the tree  
as the crows fly overhead, Gwendolyn..  
Win won not long ago and  
we have lost them and many more.

I have listened, I have heard  
and soon I too must go  
to sit on some old lonely couch  
on some lonely porch, listening  
to Dylan and thinking . . .  
Where, my God, have they all gone . . .  
Singing along with . . .‘the times they are a changing’ . . .

## **Central Avenue Starbucks**

Hunkering down in the plush seat  
at the Central Avenue Starbucks where  
there are too many young women in  
black leotards and a few camel toes,  
young men buy coffee and leave the  
middle aged and older men sitting  
in the plush purple chairs  
sipping slowly their caffeine beverage  
and remembering their own Barista youth  
when candy was dandy but liquor was quicker,  
eye level to those black stretch leotards,  
running to the Sexionary to look up

the definition of a Camel toe.  
Caramel spiced mocha truffle latte  
just walked in behind me as a  
grande espresso double foam coffee  
hunkers down in the soft chair  
across from me and wonders why  
the young men aren't wearing tight black  
leotards and then drinks her coffee  
and remembers why!

### Sweet Janine

Up until this weekend  
I was sure my life was worth  
more than twenty-five cents  
as I rummaged through the books  
at Merrifield's in Woodstock Ontario.

Did you associate the author  
with a voice in the past, or  
was he just another 5X7?  
You looked surprised  
when you smiled into my eyes  
connecting author and name,  
realizing they were the same.

Janine, my sweet friend.  
You are the reason grown men smile.  
Hold onto dreams, wonder what  
has happened since highschool,  
never imagined you older than eighteen,  
the last time I saw you smile,  
walk down the hall, talk to friends.

Please forgive my tears of joy,  
memory of you in my heart,  
thirty miles away for thirty years,  
the sincerity of my arms hug,  
thinking of you.  
Sometimes you can never go home.  
Sometimes you are already there.

*Earth Songs*, The Ontario Poetry Society, 2002

## **What if God Was One Of Us**

Like the song says;  
“What is God was one of us,  
a stranger on a bus  
trying to make his way home  
on his way back to heaven all alone.”  
After: creating, destroying, flooding,  
talking to Moses for forty days,  
watching over his flock, guiding angels,  
fathering all of Asia and a prophet,  
and just being the great I Am,  
He still has to go home alone.

He didn't create a brother and  
he probably didn't think about a sister,  
didn't make friends, all he had  
around him, alone on the throne  
were angels singing praises for a  
few thousand years and when they  
ceased to sing He says to himself  
“I AM never lonely, but . . .  
I AM alone, just a stranger on a bus  
trying to make My way home.

## **The Speed Of Dark**

*thanks to katherine gordon*

More often than not in dreams  
I find that gravity impedes me,  
changes the speed of dark and  
hides my thoughts in the solar winds.  
Every time I dream of bicycles and cars  
leaving the road was not the problem.  
Leaning on the pedal never helped because  
everyone passed me along the way.  
How can I not be in control of  
every movement within my imagination?  
In the Mobius of dark and light I  
drift between spacial star gates,  
impeded by internal gravity plating.  
Snow dreams on the other hand are  
Hell on wheels, no glaciers here,  
every downhill race a winner,  
living the Life of Riley more than once,  
losing my inhibitions on an avalanche,  
yearning for an Isaac Newton moment,  
seeing the apple falling,  
not being the apple falling . . .  
Oh when does it all end and  
when will it finally speed on by?  
Can't I run faster, further, farther  
and then awake in lucid dreaminess?  
Nothing changes the speed of dark,  
deflecting light into my nocturnal brain  
and speeds up my imaged imagination,  
changes the gravity plating within me  
ever more often than not, in my dreams.

## **Dennis George**

So long as children breathe  
or eyes can see beyond life,  
so long as adults grieve  
my father has lost a wife.

More than this memory, Mother  
for you were my slice of life  
and there could be no other  
to ease my pain and strife.

Neguesh Mother.

## **Paranoia**

You know what's really scary?

There's somebody behind you,  
No . . . Really . . .  
There's someone behind you.

## **On A Day Like This**

*for peter stamm & k gordon*

As the electricity went off  
the emergency stand by lights  
glowed in the dark.  
One day when there are no people  
left in the world to notice, there  
will be stand by lights glowing  
and the clocks on electronic devices  
will continue to tell the time that  
no longer exists, until the last  
power plants have switched off and  
the last batteries have run dry,  
leaving a once vibrant ethereal Earth  
orbiting at the speed of dark.

## **In Sao Paulo I Sat Down And Wept**

*for marcello*

On the long road home  
for no more could I roam  
I passed a man soaked in red  
whose face resembled the dead.  
The cuts and bruises caught my sight  
as I walked on towards the night.  
He was on the long road roam  
and not on the long road home.

I had wandered this mysterious Earth  
so far from the place of my birth  
and seen the misery of foreign lands  
and here was this wounded man alone,  
torn, dishevelled, bleeding to the bone.  
Then I saw the shackles on his arms  
and knew the reason for his harms.

I was neither sad nor happy going home  
just relieved to no longer be on the roam  
but as he came closer his eyes were clear  
and in his stride he showed no fear.  
His heart strong after escaping jail  
the barbed wire had not slowed his pace  
but caught his lips and pulled a smile across his face.

## **The Bus**

*for jaclyn*

God, Jehovah, Allah. The true Trinity,  
merged into one not by the believers  
who were zealots in their own interpretations  
but by those who see past the old ways,  
the revenge, the hatred, the plague of locusts  
to find the true goodness of those three religions,  
to see the world from the eyes of a child.  
Innocent of color, race, creed, belief,  
who, somewhere, anywhere, everywhere  
in this struggling, polluted, selfish world  
wakes up her father in the dark night  
on a bus on the long road home from anywhere  
to somewhere and sees an old albino man  
under a solitary ceiling light and asks  
in every tongue of this earthly Babylon  
as it travels over pavement, gravel or sod,  
“Daddy, tell me, is that God?”

### **The Buoyancy of Salt in Muskoka**

First spring tempest passing through  
swells the storm drains to over flow.  
Then while my mind soars southwest  
to home, first real meal, daughters. I  
Detect one of Mother Nature's mysteries.  
All along the storm trench, seagulls.  
Swooping, landing, eating grubs, waddling  
everywhere but in the fresh rainwater.  
Out my window not one single gull  
ventured into the draining water trough?  
Could it be the buoyancy of salt?  
Maybe like the Inuit words for snow,  
seagulls have half a dozen for water?  
Then the clap of thunder and darkness.  
I look out towards home and they are gone.

## **Related Book Reviews:**

### **Going Down Goose Lane Toward Broken Jaw:**

#### **Fredericton poems and stories,**

by Wayne Ray (London Ont. Harmonia Press, 2005) 102 pp. \$15

ISBN 0-9688885-9-3

Review by Anne Burke for *Prairie Journal of Canadian Literature*

This collection is dedicated to Ray's workmates at 203 Waggoners Lane (Fredericton New Brunswick). Ray writes in the tradition of Jack Kerouac's "On The Road; fueled by Joe Blade's "Vagabondia". (Blades was once a neighbor, hence the allusion to his "Broken Jaw" Imprint.) The allusion to "goose lane" places the locus for these poems [and stories] squarely in Fredericton, New Brunswick. (Think "Goose Lane Editions")

In "Back at The Post Office in London", Ray uses the binary of macrocosm and the microcosm to great effect. In the macrocosm, by trade he is sorting the mail, when he comes across correspondence marked "deceased". In the microcosm, in this particular instance, it signifies the death of his own father and evolves into his grief, how he was notified when his letter was returned.

There is a noble tradition of poet bards at the Post Office, gainfully employed as civil servants, while composing poetry. Witness Archibald Lampman and the Nineteenth Century Confederation Poets in Ottawa. Ray contributes his unique perspective. According to David Fraser, who offers a preface self-styled as a "review", Ray captures the poet "as voyeurs, the lonely hunting of the heart." Ray decided to include poems written to him "by friends and lovers I met along the way." We learn this from the author's comments on the poems, arranged chronologically, which he wrote when he was transferred from London Ontario to Fredericton. Fortunately, he fashioned "work" poems not only about the occupation but about graffiti ("Banting Building U of T"), protest ("George! Poets For Peace," and the Community Health Clinic "Room Mates: Samantha and Jen S."). The metaphor for "Chess Board of Life" (Wayne is moving in 5 Days") also appears in "Queen's Pawn 2". Then "Romeo & Juliet: Prick of the Dagger" is an ode to "Sam's Knife Collection." He seems preoccupied with time (dates of composition are marked by day, month and year) and place, with friends, (Breakfast at Cora's"), at the tavern ("Whippitt Lounge"), and in the poem "In a Dream".

The poem "You Cannot Give a Heart That Has Been Taken" is a collaborative poem composed online. He describes the characters by whether or not they have access to the World Wide Web. This certainly is an interesting analogy, given that he works at a Canada Post plant; he still found time to use the Internet, a competitor, if not enemy, to the mail carrier.

His haiku were translated into Japanese and published by Mercutio Press in 2003, under the title "*In A Dream*". Ray is strong on portraying aspects of character, with stream of consciousness and plotlessness by design. However, the "poetry of the People" (of which Milton Acorn was fond and for whom, Ray published his last book "*The Whiskey Jack*" the year he died), offers a kinder venue for his talents than the challenge of fiction. Perhaps the term "prose" poems might be more accurate, unless the material can prove to be the makings of a more ambitious project, such as the novel.

Wayne Ray founded HMS Press (1982) and co-founded the Canadian Poetry Association (1985). Some of them are: *Tear The Rust Off My Heart*, EOA: Prose, EOA Poetry.

## **Going Down Goose Lane Toward Broken Jaw**

by Wayne Ray (London Ont. Harmonia Press, 2005) 102 pp. \$15

ISBN 0-9688885-9-3

Review by David Fraser *Ascent Aspirations Magazine* British Columbia

In the moving from one place to another, even if the transfer is only temporary, there is a fusion of the new and the old, the present and the past, and there is a distancing and a drawing closer. Wayne Ray, in his poetry and prose on a journey to Fredericton, New Brunswick in 2002 has created in his portrayed encounters on the road and in this new city a melancholy, yet hopeful feeling of distancing and connecting, and a sense of individuals searching and being in two places at once. The effects are subtle and lyrical giving the collection a variety of perspectives that are entertaining and thoughtful.

In the opening dedication, his haiku "in a dream/they become one/moth and flame" sets the stage for a Zen-like fusion. The following haiku allude to glimpses of place and relationships and we are drawn into poems that are full of reminiscences on love and relationships that were or could have been. There is an atmosphere of a dream in the re-creations, and the fragile vulnerability within the relationships.

In "Cora's: At the Window, Behind the Pane", the narrator is [at a table watching] catching a glimpse of a waitress dreaming, "lost in laughter" and wonders "where are you my friend". In "Going Home" we get a sense of place, of the fall – the "Old Loyalist Cemetery" with its inhabitants covered with the season's leaves, - a sense of things needing to be done, an impatience to be leaving but also a feeling of a beginning. In fact, throughout the collection there are comings and goings, leavings as odyssey that are both physical and psychological.

The poet as voyeur is at work here from his first watching the waitress at the glass of a Queen Street café, to observing a friend or a lover in "Cynthia Bachelor" at the mall, not approaching to say hello or goodbye but rather holding the image and her graceful face frozen in his memory. There is a melancholy longing in these distanced observations, in this "waking, wondering, wandering mind" that speculates "if...all you see is someone in the distance and your eyes say you wish it were me" in "What if...You Walk by Me". In "Talking to Friends", the narrator says to the person fixated on the Internet connections of chat room cyber-friendships "Too many months you've felt alone" and he stands behind her like a shadow wishing she'd turn off the monitor so she could see his reflection reaching out for her.

One thinks of the lonely hunting of the heart where characters touch and almost touch, connect and almost connect. Three friends at a cozy Valentine's Day dinner – an odd number – sipping wine, dissolving the icing flowers of the cake in their mouths but it all ends with "we dissolve the petals on our tongues", very sensual, "and go home alone". In "Whippitt Lounge", a rollicking romp of "beer sloshing", "gyrating and groping" as in former college tavern days, the narrator is high on the moment and the memory, but wakes up in his own bed alone, "pockets empty" and we sense there is more of the emptiness lurking in the shadows. In the collaborative poem "You Cannot Give a Heart That Has Been Taken", a great title, this theme of love and longing, memory and melancholy flows out in wonderful lines such as "gathering shadows about you to keep you warm at night", "the drums of singers...wails the longing", "thorns long ago tearing at the flesh", "burning memory on my life/leave a sunburn on my heart."

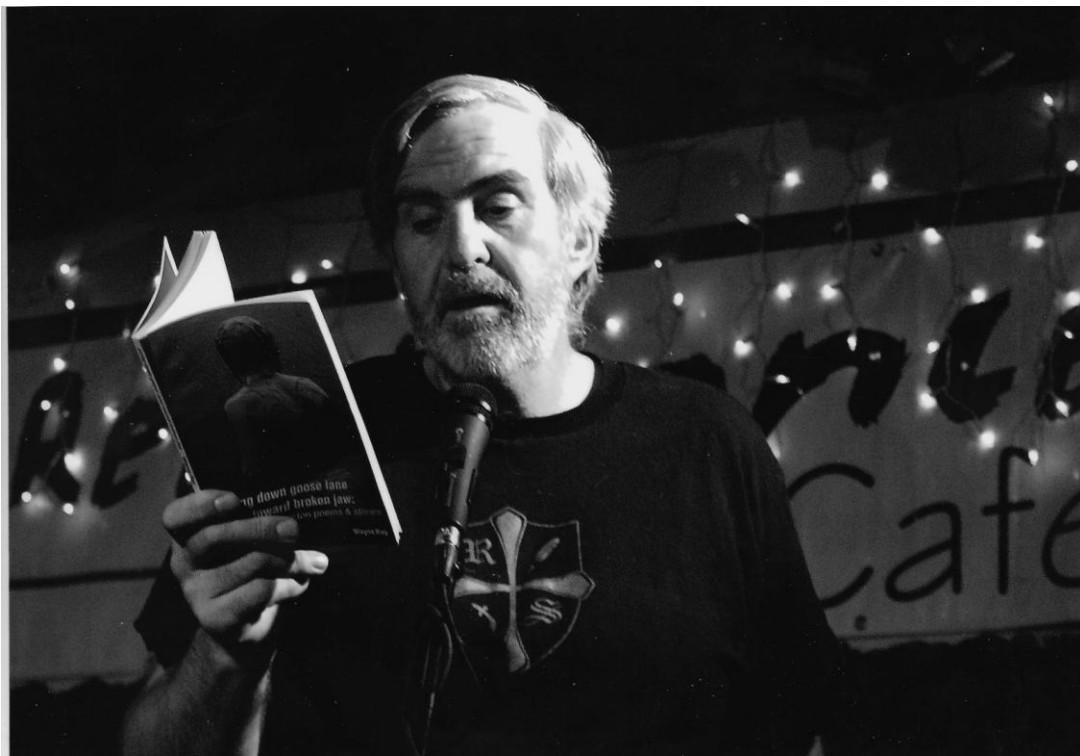
There is always the vulnerability in relationships, a sense of sacrifice as in "Romeo and Juliet: prick of the dagger". It is the pain of love that is spoken.

"for daggers deep they have known  
and sleep in quiet peace, together sewn."

In "Not Looking to be Protected from Liking You" there is an irony in the title when we hear "I found you tearing down the heart wall to my house."

In "Sego Road" the metaphor of the highway, the journey becomes linked to friendship and the journey of a relationship. Here "the signs are blurred on the other side" but on his side "your name and the/remaining mileage to your door" is clear. Other poems are more objective and allude to the war in Iraq, Princess Diana's response if she were still with us, a rant to George Bush and a letter home from a body bag.

The poems in this collection are narrative reminiscences, lyrical meditations that illustrate an actual journey over a space of time but also an internal journey, a reflection that takes us “time after page” through pleasant and painful memories and re-creations.



Wayne (Scott) Ray was born in Alabama and spent most of his first fifteen years with his family on Ernest Harmon Air Force Base in Stephenville, Newfoundland until moving to Woodstock, Ontario in 1965. He became a Canadian Citizen in 1978. He lived in Toronto with his wife and two daughters from 1973-1988 when they moved to London, Ontario in July of 1988. Wayne is the founder of HMS Press publishing, the Multicultural Poetry Reading Series (University of Toronto), Scarborough Arts Council Poetry Contest, co-founder of the Canadian Poetry Association (CPA) (1985-88 Toronto & 1992-1995 London) and co-chairman of the League of Canadian Poets: Associates (Toronto) for 1985/86. He was co-director of the Beaches Poetry Workshop in 1983 and was the recipient of the Editors Prize for 'Best Poet Published in 1989' from Canadian Author and Bookman. Through his work with the CPA as National Coordinator, it was his suggestion that established the poetry section of The Literary Review of Canada in 1993. He was instrumental in helping establish the London Arts Council and was the President of the New London Arts Festival in 1999. He is listed in Who's Who in Ontario. Wayne has several books of poetry and non-fiction published as well as credits in; anthologies, periodicals, journals and newspapers across Canada between 1983 and 2014.